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Islands, however different in appearance, to have sprung from the same stock, and hence, all the people speaking them, black, swarthy, and fair, to be of one and the same race of man, is utterly groundless, and the mere dream of very learned men, and perhaps even more imaginative than learned. I can by no means, then, agree with a very learned professor of Oxford, that the same blood ran in the veins of the soldiers of Alexander and of Clive as in those of the Hindus whom, at the interval of two-and-twenty ages, they both scattered with the same facility. I am not prepared, like him, to believe that an English jury, unless it were a packed one of learned Orientalists, with the ingenious professor himself for its foreman, would, "after examining the hoary documents of language," admit "the claim of a common descent between Hindu, Greek, and Teuton," for that would amount to allowing that there was no difference in the faculties of the people that produced Homer and Shakespear, and those that have produced nothing better than the authors of the Mahabarat and Ramayana; no difference between the home-keeping Hindus, who never made a foreign conquest of any kind, and the nations who discovered, conquered, and peopled a new world.

XXII. — *Some Particulars of the General Characteristics, Astronomy, and Mythology of the Tribes in the Central Part of Victoria, Southern Australia.* By W. E. STANBRIDGE, F.E.S., of Wombat, Victoria.

As so little appears generally known of the aborigines of Australia, and, as they have the reputation of being lowest in the scale of mankind, occupying a country so far removed from, and possessing so little in common with, other countries, it may not be inappropriate at the present time, when so much inquiry is directed to the origin of species, to lay before you some particulars of their character, habits, and ideas, from observations made during a residence of eighteen years in the wilds of Victoria, Southern Australia.

The aborigines of Victoria are associated in tribes or families, the members of which vary very much in number. Generally several tribes are united for mutual purposes under one head or chief, which office appears to be hereditary. The affairs of each tribe are managed by the old men and doctors or priests. The father or husband has uncontrolled power in his own family, even over the life of his wife. The people are very thinly scattered over the country; but each tribe has its own

boundaries, which are conterminous with those of other tribes, and the land so included has been from time immemorial parcelled out amongst its families and transmitted by direct descent to the present generation. Females inherit as well as males, but as the former frequently marry into distant tribes, their right is of but little benefit to them. This absence, however, does not impair the claim of their descendants. So much are these boundaries respected, that the member of one family does not go into the lands of his neighbour unless previously invited, hence the difficulty of inducing a native to remain at a station that is not on his own patrimony.

Unlike the aborigines of Tasmania, whose colour is black, with black woolly hair, those of Victoria have complexions of various shades of dark olive brown, and in some instances so light that a tinge of red is perceptible in the cheeks of the young, with slightly curly black hair, but there are isolated cases of woolly hair amongst the men and dark brown hair amongst the women. This difference in the colour of the skin is very marked in the half-breeds, the Tasmanian being of the black or negro hue, while the Australian is of a brown or gipsy tinge.

They are straight limbed, square shouldered, slightly but compactly made; occasionally an individual of herculean proportions is met with. There are none amongst them who are deformed, except those who have become so by accident. The men vary in stature from five, to, in a few cases, upwards of six feet. They have thick beards, high cheek bones, rather large black eyes, protruding eyebrows which make the forehead appear to recede more than it really does, as high foreheads are not uncommon amongst them; thickish noses, which are sometimes straight and sometimes curved upwards, very large mouths and teeth; the size of the latter and the squareness of the jaw are probably caused by continually tearing food with the teeth, as young children have not that squareness of jaw, neither have boys who have lived almost entirely with white people. Their mode of whistling, which consists in drawing the lower lip with the finger and thumb tightly on one side, has its influence, no doubt, on the size of the lips. The men of the Coorong, who subsist almost wholly upon fish, have much smaller mouths and thinner lips, their eyebrows also are not so heavy. In appearance they much resemble the New Zealanders.

There is a ceremony when boys arrive at puberty previous to taking rank with the men, at which, in some tribes, a doctor knocks out one of the upper front teeth, in other tribes both of the upper front teeth; again, there are tribes in which the

mouth is left entire. The women vary in height from four feet ten inches to five feet seven inches, and in personal appearance resemble the men. They have generally small hands and feet, and the usual ornament of their sex, long hair. Both sexes frequently have a row of little ribs or fleshy swellings, about two inches long across the back and breast, produced with a sharp piece of flint, and sometimes tattooings on the breast, back, and upper part of the arms, all of which is generally executed in early life by the mother; but there are aspirants to this kind of beauty in later life. The females further adorn themselves, by wearing in the cartilage of the nose a reed, or a small polished bone of the kangaroo, but the ornament most prized is made of the two upper front teeth of the same animal, or of the wallaby, by binding them together at the roots, so as to form a V; these are worn in a necklace or suspended amongst the hair.

Polygamy is customary, but the extent to which it is exercised depends less upon the will of the man than upon the respect or good feeling entertained towards him by those who have the power of betrothing; some men think one wife sufficient, but two wives seem the usually coveted number; in some instances men have three and four wives.

If females arrive at maturity unbetrothed, they are wooed and solicited of the father if he be living; otherwise of the brother, but if he be dead of the uncle; if he also has passed to the world of spirits, then of the council or chief of the tribe.

But females are generally betrothed in early infancy, either to soliciting friends, or to those with whom the father is desirous of cementing a friendship; but they remain with their parents until they arrive at a marriageable age, of which the father is the judge. The father has frequently to be solicited several times before he will bestow the daughter thus engaged, but the bridegroom is sure of obtaining his bride, as the honour both of the family and of the tribe is considered to be involved in the fulfilment of the betrothal.

If the wife desert her husband for a more favoured lover, it is incumbent on her family to chastise the guilty pair; the woman is usually speared by her father or brother, and if the punishment is not attended with fatal effects, she is returned to her lawful spouse. The man has either to submit to a certain number of spears being thrown at him, in which case he is allowed a small shield to protect himself, or to fight a single combat with one of her relatives, or with a selected member of the tribe.

The following will, perhaps, serve as an illustration of this custom. The persons for the object named had retired early in

the morning to a little dell in a vast undulating grassy plain, surrounded in the distance by conical hills, some wooded and some bare. Not many paces from the lowest part of the dell bursts forth a limpid spring, in a deep little basin encircled with high rushes, which give it the appearance of a huge nest, the reeds and rushes marking its course as it trickles away down a valley at right angles with the dell. On one side of this dell and nearest to the spring at the foot of it, lies a young woman, about seventeen years of age, sobbing, and partly supported by her mother, in the midst of wailing, weeping women; she has been twice speared in the right breast with a jagged hand spear by her brother, and is supposed to be dying. A few paces higher up the valley is a group of men; the aged men are seated, and the others surrounding the brother, who is armed with *leeowil* and *mulka*, and who is about twenty-eight years old, and of a powerful frame. In the middle of the dell opposite the group of men stands the other guilty one, a young man about twenty three years of age, a model of agility. He is armed with the same weapons as his adversary, and awaits his impetuous onset. A little in his rear, on the other side of the dell, some young men, his friends, stand armed, and ready to assist if injustice be attempted. Unless the fight be with hand spears it is very seldom that either of the combatants is killed. The *leeowil* is a wooden battle axe, the usual implement used in hand to hand encounters; the *mulka* is a strong piece of wood used as a shield.

After a man dies, if his widows have no children, when the days of mourning are over, the custom appears to be to offer them as wives, first, to his brothers, and then to his first cousins; but if they have children it is optional on their part whether they marry again.

These people are cannibals of the lowest description. New born babes are killed by their parents, and eaten by them and their children. When such revolting occurrences take place the previously born child is unable to walk, and the opinion is, that by its eating as much as possible of the roasted infant, it will possess the strength of both.

The mother-in-law or *gnalwinkurrk* does not, under any circumstances, allow her *gnalwin* or son-in-law to see her; if he be near she hides herself, and if she requires to go beyond where he is she makes a circuit to avoid him, at the same time thoroughly screening herself with her cloak. Dr. McKenna, the consul at Melbourne for the Argentine Confederation, states that the same curious custom is practised by the aborigines of that republic on the banks of the river Plate.

Opossum skins, sewed together with kangaroo or emu sinews,

form the rugs with which both sexes are usually clothed: various devices in regular patterns are scraped with a shell upon the skins to make them supple, and they are coloured red or yellow according to taste. Wallaby and small kangaroo skins are used for the same purposes. The men wear the rug secured over the shoulder by a peg, which leaves the right arm at liberty. Women wear it as a cloak, the string of the net or basket worn at the back keeps it in its place, and there can be formed when required a hood for carrying an infant.

A good opossum rug contains about sixty skins, but old women and children frequently have little more than sufficient to cover their backs. Excepting the girdle or small apron of suspended strings, twisted from bark, which is always worn by females until maturity; young persons otherwise almost discard clothing in warm weather.

Children generally have two names, one derived from their birthplace, the other from some characteristic in later life; for example, a boy was born under a woorack (*Banksia*), he was, therefore, named Yab-woorack, or leaf of the woorack; in after life, from the length of his legs, he was called Dittenaranarry.

In summer, bathing is much practised, but there is no attempt to cleanse the person. The ordinary mode of refreshing the face is to rub upon it a little grease, which is then wiped off, and the face decorated with raddle; this, with some grease upon the hair, and the latter drawn under a band round the head, completes that part of the toilet.

It is the business of the female to construct the lodge, which is usually a screen formed of boughs and grass, placed in a crescent form, and supported by a rude framework, which is kept in a slanting position by a prop; the back is placed to windward and the fire is made sufficiently in front to enable the occupants to lie between it and the screen. When in the vicinity of large trees, in wet weather, the men strip sheets of bark to be used instead of boughs, these generally require the application of heat to prevent them cracking while being opened flat; for this purpose they are placed over a small fire, the smoke of which gives a film of black to the sap side, and upon this, not unfrequently, they make rude drawings of men in corroboree, of kangaroo or emu hunts, or of men fighting.

In the neighbourhood of Mount Gambier some of the lodges or oolahs are very pretty, being dome-shaped, and constructed of boughs closely interwoven, with a small arched opening for the entrance, and a little aperture in the crown for the escape of the smoke. To throw down a lodge, although it may have been abandoned for months, is a very great insult, and a proof of a desire to destroy the family to whom it belonged.

It is also the female's province to clear away the grass within the lodge, lest it should take fire, to collect firewood and make the fire, which is always very small, so that it may not attract the attention of an enemy. When travelling they always carry fire, that is, a piece of lighted bark. She fetches water if it be near in a bowl-shapen excrescence of some tree; but if far away, it is carried in a small skin taken off the animal through the opening of the neck; either the feet and tail are left on, or the openings are secured by a sinew. She also gathers any edible roots or succulent vegetables that grow in the neighbourhood. The fleshy roots in general use are called cooloor, palilla and munya; the two first, species of geranium, are of an acrid flavour until roasted, the last is sweet, and frequently eaten uncooked; the roots of the bulrush and another aquatic plant are also occasionally used for food. The succulent vegetables in general use are the young tops of the munya, the sow-thistle, and several kinds of fig-marigold.

At Mount Gambier the females collect large quantities of the roots of the fern, which are eaten when baked, as well as the pretty green and gold frogs, and a very fleshy mushroom, which is red on the upper and green on the under side; these are brought home strung on rushes. Our mushroom is very rarely used. In spring they gather cakes of wattle (*mimosa*) gum, and use it dissolved in water. The implement with which these roots are gathered, and which is constantly carried by the women for offensive and defensive purposes, is a small pole, seven or eight feet long, straightened and hardened by fire, flattened and pointed at the end.

The men hunt sometimes alone, but generally in company. If opossums or squirrels are the game, the motcha is in constant requisition for cutting notches in the bark of the trees, for the reception of the ball of the great toe, to enable the hunter to climb to the holes where the opossums seclude themselves during the day. If the little protuberance caused by the wood grub meet the eye of the hunter, the motcha will assist him to that which will at once help to appease his appetite and recruit his energy. The result of the day's sport will be from five to fourteen opossums.

The motcha is an oblong flattened piece of black stone, like lava, sharpened at the end, and fixed in a strip of wattle; the wattle is bent round the stone and the two ends tied together for the handle; the stone is made fast with a cement of gum and ground shells.

If the object of the chase be the kangaroo or emu, the weapons are some light spears, with the wummera to throw them; and if the country be very open, a shield of green boughs fas-

tened upon a pointed stake is necessary to enable the hunter to stalk his game. If there be none in sight, tracks are searched for; the grass slightly pressed down, a broken twig, or a little scratch upon the earth, invisible to the uninitiated, is sufficient to enable him to follow until the game is found.

Should the chase result in securing a kangaroo, and if on opening it there be found a caul, the latter will be greedily eaten by the huntsman, as it is supposed to possess the virtue of imparting skill; but an emu would be preferred, as its flesh is highly prized, and its fat is used for greasing their faces, hair, and weapons. Young persons are cautioned against eating emu's flesh, as it produces evil consequences to them.

A skilful spearman will strike his object with tolerable force and accuracy at a distance of fifty or eighty yards; but this proficiency cannot be general, as the feat of having killed two or three emus in early life attaches to the individual a characteristic name, which is not, however, common amongst them.

The light spear is about nine feet long, and is either a reed having at the end a pointed piece of hard wood, about two feet long, secured to the reed by cement and a binding of sinews, or a thin sapling scraped to the required size with a shell, straightened and hardened by being passed through hot ashes, with a piece of the flower-stem of the grass-tree for the butt. In summer the spears are barbed for about eight inches, at the points, with small sharp pieces of flint fixed in cement.

The wummera is a wooden instrument, upon the making of which great care is bestowed; it is about thirty inches long, with a hook at one end to fix into the butt of the spear; it acts as a sling, giving force and precision to its flight: quivering the spear and poising it with the wummera are the first steps in the spearman's art. Some boomerangs or waddies are also generally carried, to be thrown at any other animals that may be met with. The waddie is a stick of heavy wood slightly bent, and pointed at the ends.

That curious weapon, the boomerang, varies much in size; on the Darling it is about three feet long, whereas on the Murray, and to the south of that river, it is not more than twenty inches in length. When used in hunting it is, like the waddie, thrown directly at the object. If used in fighting, it is made to trundle along the ground like a hoop, either straight to the object, or on a curve. When thrown as a feat of skill, it is made to bowl along the ground for about forty yards, when the rapid vertical revolutions become horizontal, which cause it to ascent perpendicularly fifty or sixty feet. When the projecting force is nearly exhausted, it seems for a short time stationary in the air, excepting the rapid horizontal rotatory motion,

which suddenly ceasing, the boomerang swoops down from its height towards the thrower, and frequently passes over his head.

In order to catch wombats, which are seldom seen by day, the hunter has to examine the tracks to decide which is the burrow occupied; when he has done so, and determined upon its course, he digs a round perpendicular hole, sometimes to the depth of ten feet, so as to intercept the burrow a few feet from its end, and rarely fails in securing the game. Pigeon and quail are caught with a noose at the end of a very long thin rod. Ducks are taken, sometimes in considerable numbers, by suspending a net of large meshes, about twenty feet long and four feet wide, across the narrow part of a lagoon, secured on each side to trees, a little below the usual height of flight; when all is ready a man puts up the ducks, which fly along the lagoon as they usually do. When they approach the net, men who are posted in the branches above throw waddies at them, which so confuse the ducks that they dart down and some become entangled in the net, when the ends are loosened and the game secured. Nets are generally made of the fibres of the inner bark of the mesmate (eucalyptus) twisted into a thread, and knotted into meshes suitable to the various purposes required.

A great many eggs and fledglings of the numerous waterfowl are taken by the aid of the canoe; this is a sheet of bark stripped from a slightly bent gum-tree, which gives such a degree of convexity that the body of the canoe can be immersed a few inches without the ends coming to the level of the water; the inner side is fired to make it tough, and there is a stick placed across at each end to keep it open. A large one is about twelve feet long and two feet and a half wide, and will carry four persons. The canoe is much used for spearing fish in shallow water, and for driving them into a net stretched across a lagoon.

On the Murray the fisherman at night makes a fire on the front of his canoe, and lets it drift down the stream; the fish being attracted by the light, he strikes them with a double-pointed spear. It is a favourite feat on the Murray to dive into the river spear in hand, and come up with a fish upon it; but the children in the neighbourhood of that river appear able to swim as soon as they can walk. The females swim in the same manner as dogs, by forcing down the limbs; the men by throwing one arm forward. In those parts of the country where the streams are small, the people cannot swim. Great quantities of fish are caught on the Murray by placing nets in the little streams formed by the overflowing and receding of the river.

On small streams, weirs of stakes and twigs are made for the flooding water to pass through, and a conical sack or basket made of rushes, about eight feet deep and three feet wide at the mouth, is placed in the middle of the stream to catch small fish.

The nests of the loan abound with eggs, at the same time that the pityecol, or native peach, and the fruit of the sandalwood are ripe; the fruit of the last named tree, and the bark of its young roots, are roasted before eaten. All these are most abundant in parts of the country far removed from permanent water, therefore the hunter has to draw his supply of that element from the roots of the swamp-box and weir mallee, which run a few inches below the surface of the earth; sometimes five pints of this water, which is very good, are taken from one root.

Loan nests are generally twelve feet across, and about three feet above the surface of the ground. At the commencement of winter the loans open out the old nest, and during the winter scratch into it all the leaves and twigs that are within twenty yards; at the end of the wet season they cover them with about two feet of earth; a space of eighteen inches in diameter in the centre, and about the same distance from the top, is the true nest, where the eggs are deposited on their ends, side by side in a circle, the usual number of eggs being about twelve. During the laying season the nest is left slightly hollow in the middle, which leads into it any rain that falls, thereby retarding the fermentation of the vegetable matter until the laying is finished, when the nest is heaped into a conical shape. The parent birds watch the nest to repair any damage that it may sustain during incubation, but do not assist the young ones to escape from it. Many of the nests must have been occupied for generations, as but few deserted ones are found.

When the hunter is a little rested after returning to his lodge, he proceeds to cook his game, an operation in which he takes great pride. If the game be small, the hot embers with a few green leaves scattered over them will afford means; if small fish, green grass is substituted for the leaves, and a few minutes suffice for cooking them to perfection. But if the game be large, an old cooking place or oven is resorted to, fire is made in a little hollow, and some of the pieces of baked clay which are lying about are placed upon it. When these are sufficiently heated, the hollow is cleared of the embers, and a little grass or a few leaves are strewed over it, upon which the game is laid. More leaves or grass with the hot pieces of clay and embers are placed upon it, and the whole is covered with earth. These cooking places or ovens are generally on the banks of rivers or lagoons, and are numerous throughout the

country; some of them, where fuel is very scarce, are about twenty yards across and five feet high, which, at their apparent rate of increase of size, must have been many centuries in accumulating.

After a day of successful hunting, the evening is devoted to a very rude description of concert; men and women sing, the former accompanying themselves with the clashing of two pieces of hard wood, about eight inches long, held lightly between the fingers, and the women by beating upon a tightly folded opossum rug—a rude substitute for a drum. The sharp clash of the wood, softened by the drumming, accompanied by a wild air, make a monotonous, but as they keep excellent time a not uninteresting music, when heard at a little distance in the stillness of night. The following day is employed in preparing skins, or making spears, boomerangs, nets, or whatever the individual or his part of the country excels in, for their own use, or for presents or barter at the next corroboree; the females busy themselves in making net-bags or net-bands, which are worn around the head by both sexes, or rush baskets, which are strong and neatly finished, or mats for collecting leerp, a little scale-like manna which exudes from, and adheres to, the leaf of the young mallee; this is sometimes gathered in considerable quantities, and is drunk dissolved in water.

Corroborees take place generally about the period of the new moon, and last three days or nights, messengers being sent to the neighbouring tribes to arrange the time and place of meeting, and also to those at a greater distance, perhaps sixty miles, to invite them to come. A messenger goes on his mission with as great an air of importance as though a people's destiny depended on the result; a hand-spear, a wummera, and a tomahawk forming his equipments. Previous to assembly, great efforts are made to prepare articles for presents or exchange, and to collect food, as it is not probable that sufficient game will be found on the spot to support so many persons. As the people come near the rendezvous, they send up columns of smoke to give notice of their approach.

In the meeting of strangers great reserve is displayed by the men: the contrary is, however, the case with the females, they speak together at once, although in a subdued tone. The men at first rather avoid than look at or speak to each other, and it is not until they have been seated near together some time that one in a very low voice makes of the other some kind inquiry; then by degrees mutual inquiries break down the barrier of reserve, until one invites the other to sit at his fire, when conversation is unrestrained.

Friendly tribes arrange their lodges together, but each in its own group; those that are less friendly group their lodges a little distance apart. Common safety seems to dictate this arrangement, as suspicion of intended injury is constantly on the alert; a word sometimes causes the whole camp to be in commotion, and fire-brands to fly about in all directions.

On the first night strangers are invited to witness a display of skill in dancing by the tribes of the neighbourhood. A large fire being made, the spectators are arranged on one side of it, and on their left a group of females is seated to sing and drum upon opossum rugs to the time of the conductor, an old man, who chants and beats time with two hard pieces of wood in the manner previously described; he walks to and fro between the drummers and dancers, at first doing so very slowly, but gradually increasing in speed until he attains the utmost quickness. The dancers are attired with a girdle, a bunch of opossum-skin thongs being suspended before and behind, and are painted according to taste, with a paste of calcined talc, some in wavy lines, others in spots, to mark every bone, and to appear like an animated skeleton, is a favourite mode. Usually they have a boomerang in each hand, which they clash in excellent time, in certain parts of the chant: sometimes the small pieces of hard wood are substituted for the boomerangs, at others a bunch of twigs with leaves, and a similar bunch fastened round each ankle. The dancers emerge from out the gloom of night in compact array, and with a great whirring noise made with the mouth, the grotesque white painting showing clearly as they approach the fire by a shuffling movement. When sufficiently within the light they continue this movement slightly sideways, adding a jerk which throws out the knees and makes the whole person quiver. In the different stages of the dance they change the position of the boomerangs, which are held a little over the head, and occasionally clash them to the chant. When the first rank has advanced to its proper position, a second rank shoots out sideways from behind, then a third rank, all with the same step and whirring noise, to the time of the conductor. Then some females come forward and join on at the ends of the line of men, dancing with a step like that made in running. They do not sing, and are arrayed in a girdle of suspended emu feathers, and a necklace of kangaroo teeth, with a little chinkey chinkey, or rattle, to relieve their complexions. When the conductor has raised the dance to its utmost speed, they finish with a great whirring, and the dancers retire into night's gloom. This is repeated until the evening's entertainment is finished. On the following night the compliment is returned, the resi-

dents being invited by the visitors to an exhibition of their ability, probably a slight variation from the previous evening's display. On the third night, residents and guests show their good feeling towards each other by all dancing together, with the females and old men for spectators, as on the previous occasions.

On the first day there is a distribution of presents, and an interchange of such little articles as are peculiar to the locality from which they come; one tribe may be rich in wooden spears, another in reed spears or boomerangs, or have a fortunate deposit of chinkey-chinkey, or crystals of kolkebanya (talc).

During the day the young men (who on such occasions frequently wear a necklace of a great many coils made of threaded short pieces of reed, as well as armlets of opossum-skin) divert themselves with feats of skill in wrestling, throwing the spear or boomerang; and the boys play at weet-weet, a little piece of wood about five inches long, and conical at each end, to one of which is attached a straw-like twig about three feet long; the feat consists in making it leap and run the farthest along the ground without breaking the twig, and the mode of throwing is, to take hold of the end, swing it over head, and dash it on the ground. In the meanwhile the old men, seated like Turks in the shade of the giant gum-tree, discuss tribal affairs, or indulge in conversation on other matters, as they whisk away the flies with a bunch of opossum-skin thongs, and watch the feats going on before them.

On the following day, if provisions are scarce, they make up large hunting parties, and the females go in merry bands searching for any edible roots that grow around. On the third day they disperse, without any formal leave-taking, to fulfil other engagements or to return to their own hunting grounds.

Corroborees sometimes do not pass off so amicably; an old grievance may be revived, or a new one may arise, which will not admit of friendly arrangements; in which case they resort to fighting. Such was the position of affairs between certain tribes one beautiful November morning, when they adjourned from their camping ground to a little valley bright with flowers, the low hills on either side of which were thickly studded with shrubby trees. At the foot of the valley there was a clear lake, where swans and pelicans were sailing in all the pride of freedom; and on its margin, under some large gum trees, grew the white and blue forget-me-not, from which quail and snipe started at every step. Some rocky hills jutted into the opposite side of the lake, and beyond the plain stretched away up the valley of the Ficry Creek, till it met the wooded spurs of the

Pyrenees, whose rounded heights closed the view. On the low hills on either side, amongst the shrubby trees, the belligerent tribes, about a hundred men in number, took up their respective positions, with loud shouts of defiance, and in constant motion, to enable them the more readily to avoid the missiles of their adversaries. Near the men, and round the upper part of the valley, the women were stationed in little groups. Suddenly the tribe on one side rushed in an irregular line down the hill, and, after having discharged their boomerangs, which trundled along the ground like hoops, up the hill of their opponents, instantly retreated to their partial cover. The other tribe then rushed down their hill, and discharged their boomerangs in the same manner at the retreating body; again the first tribe assault, and again their opponents repel it, every man vigorously leaping and shouting. While the young women collected the boomerangs and carried them to the men, occasionally exhorting them or fighting amongst themselves with their poles, the old women screamed and threw dust into the air, clasping their hands high over head, and quivering in every limb as it fell upon them. At length the men on either side seized their leewards and mulkas, and rushed into the valley to meet each other hand to hand, fighting as with battle-axe and shield. In a brief space of time, a few bruises, scratches, and broken fingers, satisfy the contending parties, and all appear friends again.

When death visits a tribe there is great weeping and lamentation amongst the women, the elder portion of whom lacerate their temples with their nails; which they also do on all occasions of their friends being in pain or trouble. As the big tears course each other down their cheeks, the blood may sometimes be seen trickling from their temples. The parents of the deceased lacerate themselves fearfully, especially if it be an only son whose loss they deplore. The father beats and cuts his head with a tomahawk until he utters bitter groans. The mother sits by the fire and burns her breasts and abdomen with a small fire-stick till she wails with pain; then she replaces the stick in the fire, to use again when the pain is less severe. This continues for hours daily, until the time of lamentation is completed; sometimes the burns thus inflicted are so severe as to cause death. The relatives of the deceased cover their heads and the upper part of their faces with a white talcy clay, which is worn during the time of mourning; and widows, in some instances, have the hair first cut off with a little fire-stick close to the head, by the doctor or priest, before they assume this badge of woe.

When a person dies of a loathsome disease, the body is burned; while that of a young person, whose death is attributable to a different cause, is put into a tree to decay. The bones are afterwards collected and buried, the mother sometimes securing the small bones of the legs, to wear round her neck as a memorial. Persons of matured life, especially old men and doctors, are buried with much ceremony. The grave is made in a picturesque spot, to which the body is borne by the relatives; and with it are interred the weapons and other articles belonging to the deceased. The grass is cleared away around the grave for about a yard at each side, and eight yards at each end, in the form of a canoe, and the ground carefully swept daily by the female relatives; and for a time a small fire is made every night at the foot of the grave. If the person were much respected, a little covering of boughs or bark upon four supports is placed over it, and the canoe-shaped space neatly fenced with stakes.

All deaths from natural causes are attributed to the machinations of enemies, who are supposed to have sought for and burnt the excrement of the intended victim, which, according to the general belief, causes a gradual wasting away. The relatives, therefore, watch the struggling feet of the dying person, as they point in the direction whence the injury is thought to come, and serve as a guide to the spot where it should be avenged. This is the duty of the nearest male relative; should he fail in its execution, it will ever be to him a reproach, although other relatives may have avenged the death. If the deceased were a chief, then the duty devolves upon the tribe. Chosen men are sent in the direction indicated, who kill the first persons they meet, whether men, women, or children; and the more lives that are sacrificed, the greater is the honour to the dead. The dead are very rarely spoken of, and then never by name, but in a subdued voice, as the lost one, or the poor fellow that is no more; to speak of them by name would, it is supposed, excite the malignity of Couit-gil, the spirit of the departed, which hovers upon the earth for a time, and ultimately goes towards the setting sun.

The tribes in the neighbourhood of Fiery Creek have two other malignant spirits—Neulam-kurrrk, the evil spirit which inhabits craters and caves, and in the form of an old woman steals children and eats them; and Colbumatuan-kurrrk, the spirit of storms, which kills or injures people by throwing limbs of trees upon them or in their way for them to fall against at night. They have also a good spirit named Barn-bungil, who is the reliever of pain.

One of the legends that these tribes are fond of relating is, that Tyrrinallum (Mount Elephant) and Bouningyoung (two volcanic hills about thirty miles apart) were formerly black men, that they quarrelled and fought, the former being armed with a lecowil and the latter with a hand spear, and after a prolonged contest, Tyrrinallum thrust his spear in Bouningyoung's side, the cause of the present hollow in the side of the hill, which so infuriated him that he dealt the other a tremendous blow, burying the point of the lecowil in his head, which made the present large crater, and knocked him to the spot where he now stands.

There are doctors or priests of several vocations; of the rain, of rivers, and of human diseases. The office is alleged to be obtained by the individual visiting, while in a trance of two or three days duration, the world of spirits, and there receiving the necessary initiation, but there are natives who refuse to become doctors, and disbelieve altogether the pretensions of those persons.

The medical doctor occasionally administers a decoction of a fleshy-rooted geranium, the only root used medicinally, and he has been known to bleed in the arm with a sharp flint; but incantation is the panacea for all the ills to which flesh is heir, whilst it is also regarded as the cause. The patient is seated in front of the operator, who utters a monotonous chant, makes passes by drawing his hands downwards over the part affected, and at intervals rubbing and blowing upon it. At the conclusion, supposing the disorder to be rheumatism, hot ashes are applied, but as incantation loses its power by the presence of a third person, it is very seldom and only by accident that the ceremony is witnessed. There is but small field for the doctor's art, as the only contagious disorder appears to be a mild form of hooping-cough, but many persons in advanced life are met with who are pitted as by small-pox.

When the river is very low, the doctor or priest is entreated to increase the supply of water: if the signs in the atmosphere are favourable, he, chanting, and with much gesticulation, places some human hair in the stream. The rain doctor performs his office in a similar way, but instead of placing human hair in the river, he drops it into the fire. Human hair is never burnt at other times for fear of causing a great fall of rain, nor does any one ever spit into the fire, as it would cause some unknown injury to the person so offending. It is also supposed that a shooting star (*Porkelontourte*) portends evil to those who have lost a front tooth, to avert which they stir up the fire and cast about firebrands.

All the tribes have traditions, and particular families have the reputation in their respective tribes of possessing the most exact knowledge of them.

A family having this character in the Boorong tribe, who inhabit the Mallee country in the neighbourhood of Lake Tyrnil, and who take pride in saying that they know more of astronomy than any others, state that the earth is flat, and that it was in darkness until the sun was made by Pupperimbul. This person was one of the race who then inhabited the earth, and who are now called Nurrumbung-uttias, or old spirits. They possessed fire, and also the same characteristics as the present race, but were translated in various forms to the heavens before the present race came into existence. All the celestial bodies, as well as all appearances in (tyrille) space, are supposed to have been made by them. They exercise all spiritual influences, whether for good or evil upon the earth, where they are represented in a material form, amongst other creatures, by the Pupperimbul (*Estrela Temporalis*), to kill one of which would be avenged by a deluge of rain.

Gnowee (Sun). An emu's egg, prepared and cast into (tyrille) space by Pupperimbul, before which the earth was in darkness. It is said by another tribe that the emu's egg was prepared by Bermberm-gl, and carried into space by Penmen, a small bird which they do not destroy.

Chargee Gnowee (Venus). Sister of the Sun, and wife of Ginabong-bearp.

Ginabong-bearp (Jupiter), Foot of Day. A chief of the Nurrumbung-uttias, and husband of Chargee Gnowee.

Mityan (Moon), Native Cat (*Dasyurus Geoffroyii*), who fell in love with one of Unurgunite's wives, and while trying to induce her to run away with him, is discovered by Unurgunite, when a fight takes place; Mityan is beaten and runs away, and has been wandering ever since.

Marpean-kurk (Arcturus). Mother of Djuit and Weet-kurk. The discoverer of the bittur and the instructor of the aborigines where to find it. When it is coming into season with them, it is going out of season with her. The bittur is the pupa of the wood ant, which is found in large communities, and of which the aborigines are very fond. They subsist almost entirely upon it during part of the months of August and September. When she is in the north at evening, the bittur is coming into season; when she sets with the sun the bittur is gone, and (cotchi) summer begins.

Djuit (Antares). Son of Marpean-kurk; the star on either side is his wife.

Ncilloan (Lyra), a Loan flying (Leipoa ocellata). The mother of Totyarguil, and discoverer of the loan eggs, which knowledge she imparted to the aborigines. When the loan eggs are coming into season on earth, they are going out of season with her. When she sets with the sun the loan eggs are in season.

Totyarguil (Aquila). The star on either side is his wife. He was the son of Ncilloan, and was, while bathing, killed by a bunyip, his remains were afterwards rescued by his uncle, Collenbitchick.

Although the bunyip appears to be an imaginary creature, yet it is feared by every one, and is described as having a head and neck like an emu, and as inhabiting deep holes in rivers and lakes, where it kills persons who venture therein.

Karick Karick (the two stars in the end of the tail of Scorpio). A male and female falcon.

Berm-berm-gl (two large stars in the fore legs of Centaurus). Two brothers noted for their courage and destructiveness, who spear and kill Tchín-gal. The eastern stars of Crux are the points of the spears that have passed through him, the one at the foot through his neck, and that in the arm through his back.

Tchín-gal (the dark space between the fore legs of Centaurus and Crux) Emu. Who pursues Bunya until he takes refuge in a tree, and who is afterwards killed by Berm-berm-gl.

Bunya, (star in the head of Crux) Opossum. Who is pursued by Tchín-gal, and who, in his fright, lays his spears at the foot of a tree and runs up it for safety. For such cowardice he became an opossum.

Tourt-chinboiong-gherra (Coma Berenices). A flock of small birds drinking rain-water, which has lodged in a fork of a tree.

Kourt-chin (Magellan Clouds). The larger cloud a male, and the lesser cloud a female native companion (Grus Australasianus).

War-ring (Galaxy). The smoke of the fires of the Nurrumbung-uttias. Another account is, that only a part of the galaxy is the smoke of the fires of the Nurrumbung-uttias, and that the other part is two Mindii, enormous snakes which made the Murray (Millec). The existing Mindii are about eighteen feet long.

Kulkun-bulla (the stars in the belt and scabbard of Orion). A number of young men dancing. (A corroboree.)

Larnan-kurk (Pleiades). A group of young women playing to Kulkun-bulla.

Ghellar-lec (Aldebaran), Rose Cockatoo, (Cacatue Lead-

beateri). An old man chanting, and beating time to Kulkun-bulla and Larnan-kurrk.

Ware-pil (Sirius), Male Eagle. A chief of the Nurrumbung-uttias, and brother to War.

Collow-gullouric Ware-pil (Rigel), Female Eagle. Wife of Ware-pil.

Won (Corona). A boomerang thrown by Totyarguil.

Weet-kurrk (Star in Boötes, west of Arcturus). Daughter of Marpean-kurrk.

War (Canopus), Male Crow. The brother of Ware-pil, and the first to bring fire from (tyrille) space, and give it to the aborigines, before which they were without it.

Collow-gullouric War (a large red star in Rober Caroli, marked 966), Female Crow. Wife of War. All the small stars around her are her children.

Yerrer-det-kurrk (Achernar). Nalwin-kurrk, or mother of Totyarguil's wives.

Otchocut (Delphinus). Great Fish.

Collen-bitchick (double star in the head of Capricornus); a large ant. Uncle to Totyarguil, and rescuer of his remains from the Bunyip. The double star is his fingers feeling for the bank of the river.

Yurree (Castor), Wanjel (Pollux). Two young men that pursue Purra, and kill him at the commencement of the great heat; and Coonar-toorung (Mirage) is the smoke of the fire by which they roast him. When their smoke is gone weeit (autumn) begins.

Purra (Capella); Kangaroo. Who is pursued and killed by Yurree and Wanjel.

Unurgunite (a small star marked fifth magnitude, 22, between two larger ones, in the body of Canis Major). He fights Mityan and makes him run away for having tried to induce one of Unurgunite's wives to elope with him; the star on either side of Unurgunite is his wife, that farthest from him is the object of Mityan's affections.

The tribes inhabiting the country extending from Swan Hill to Mount Franklin have similar names and mythological representations for the stars to those here described. The language of the aborigines varies very much, and although they generally speak two or three dialects, they cannot understand a person that comes from a great distance. Taking the name represented by lodge, as an example of such variations, at Melbourne it is called mia-mia, at the Ficry Creek Iyaeu, and at Mount Gambier oolah. Over a considerable tract of country man is called coolec, and woman bair-kurrk.

They have no name for numerals above two, but by repetition they count to five; they also record the days of the moon by means of the fingers, the bones and joints of the arms and the head. Their year commences at the end of March or the beginning of April, and is divided into four seasons. The first season is vecitt, or autumn; the second mycr, or winter; the third gnalleu, or spring; the fourth cotchi, or summer.

The dread of rain as a punishment for burning human hair, or killing a Pupperimbul, is rather curious, as there appears no cause for it. The country from the Pyrenees to the Murray is frequently without rain for months together, and the rivers there rarely flow more frequently than on alternate winters. The neighbourhood of the Salt Lake, Tyrril, the country more particularly alluded to, is so devoid of surface permanent water, that it is inhabited by the natives only in winter, except when they have recourse to the water in the roots of the Mallee.

I have not attempted any inference in the foregoing paper, but plainly to state facts as I found them, in the hope that they may attract the attention of those who have made ethnology their study, and assist to elicit from them conclusions that may farther advance the knowledge of the history of mankind. In that result I shall have the fullest confidence if the facts in this paper produce in others the astonishment that I felt, as I sat by a little camp fire, with a few boughs for shelter, on a large plain, listening for the first time to two aborigines, speaking of Yurrec, Wanjel, Larnan-kurk, Kulkun-bulla, as they pointed to those beautiful stars.*

* The mythological portion of this paper, in a rather different form, was read by me before the Philosophical Society at Melbourne in 1857, and published in the *Transactions* of that society in 1858, but nearly the whole of that publication was destroyed at the time their temporary offices were burned.